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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations, Tuesday, February 8, 1936.

Hello folks. When I looked out of my window this morning the snowflakes were swirling through the air and there was nothing in the wintry scene that would even suggest a topic for a Garden Calendar talk today. Dear me, I said to my better half, what in the world shall I tell the Farm and Home Hour about their gardens on such a day as this. "Tell them," she replied, "to take that new seed catalog that came yesterday morning and order the flower seeds and the vegetable seeds that they are going to need for planting just a little later when the snows are over and the sun comes out warm and bright." "Most people" she continued, "put off ordering until time to plant then the rush is on and there is delay in getting the seeds and quite often the choicest varieties are all sold out."

I don't know just how much of this was intended for my benefit but I was sort of laughing to myself for on my desk there is a collection of seeds of annual flowering plants of the choicest varieties and strains that one of the Western seed firms sent me to plant in my garden and also on my desk ready to go into the mail are two seed orders all made up and covering both flower and vegetable seeds that I want for planting this spring. I don't propose to be caught napping this spring and I intend to have all the garden and flower seeds that I will need for early planting right on hand when I hear the first note of the robin or warble of the bluebird. I just made one New Year resolution and that was, and still is, to have a better garden in 1936.

In the first place most of us who have the necessary land will want plenty of peas, beans, sweet corn, tomatoes, lettuce, or altogether about fifteen or twenty vegetables in our gardens. We have at least fifty or sixty different vegetables to choose from but twenty will include all of the more important from a food standpoint. Without detracting from our supply of fresh garden vegetables most of us can have a beautiful flower garden. The twelve packets of annual flower seeds now on my desk, together with the seeds we saved from our flower garden last year, are sufficient to give us a wonderful flower garden and many plants to give to our neighbors.

Old man depression seems to be on the run but I believe we could hasten his complete departure by having a good garden and by surrounding our homes with bright colored flowers to cheer us up and give us courage to carry on through the brightening days. Incidentally I would like to see many of our Farm and Home Hour families set about to improve their home surroundings by permanent shrubbery plantings around the house foundations and perhaps the establishment of a small rose garden. Many of you no doubt have a considerable number of rose plants growing about your homes but the choicest roses are produced where you set aside a particular area and especially prepare the soil before you plant your roses. When it comes to getting plenty of blooms some of the old and dependable varieties of roses that our mothers grew in their

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gardens are still on the preferred list. It will soon be time in most sections to give the bush roses their annual spring pruning and incidentally most people fail to prune the tea and hybrid tea and hybrid perpetual roses closely enough. In most cases these plants should be headed back to within 8 or 10 inches of the ground in order to secure long sturdy stems and fine blooms. Climbing roses should not be pruned until after they have completed blooming.

The same principle applies to the pruning of shrubbery, the shrubs that bloom early, Spirea, Deutzia, Japonica and the like should not be pruned until after they bloom while those like Hydrangeas that bloom later in the summer should be pruned in the spring before the buds start. Evergreens should not be pruned heavily, in fact their pruning should consist mainly of a light shearing and this should not be done until about the time growth starts. At this season of the year it is extremely important in most sections that grapes be given their annual pruning.

One point that I wish to emphasize is that you do not require a large space in order to have an attractive flower garden nor do you need to go to any great expense for seeds and fertilizers. We have bulletins on roses, annual flowering plants, perennials, lawns, rockeries and a great many other subjects and we will be glad to help you by sending you these bulletins or answering your special questions, and don't forget that your State College and Experiment Station folks can give you local information that may apply more directly to your conditions than does the information contained in the Government bulletins.

In closing today I want to suggest that in ordering your supply of seeds that you include just a little extra for some poor family of your neighborhood that has the land but no money with which to buy seeds. You will not miss it and you may help somebody to have a good garden who would otherwise be deprived of fresh vegetables and flowers this summer.

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